

## Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-01 CEA-01

AGR-05 SAJ-01 NIC-01 /089 W  
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P 172134Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5748

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 0531

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MX E/INV VE CU

SUBJ: U.S. INVESTMENT IN MEXICO--VENEZUELA--CUBA

1. MARQUIS CHILDS, WITH WHOM I HAD HAD A LONG CONVERSATION YESTERDAY, WAS KIND ENOUGH TO CALL AGAIN TODAY TO REPORT ON HIS CONVERSATION WITH FAUSTO ZAPATA, SUBSECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY, AND IN MANY WAYS ECHEVERRIA'S GENERAL FACTOTUM. (ALTHOUGH ZAPATA'S MAIN FUNCTION IN SUPPOSEDLY HANDLING FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC PRESS, HE IS ALSO USED FOR SUCH DIVERSE MATTERS AS ORGANIZING -- IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD-- THE MEETING OF AMERICAN BUSINESS AND BANKING LEADERS WITH ECHEVERRIA ON JANUARY 18 AS WELL AS THE DETAILS OF MRS. ECHEVERRIA'S VISIT TO CASTRO CUBA.)

2. ZAPATA TOLD CHILDS THAT PRESIDENT INTENDED TO GIVE THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY ASSURANCES THAT MEXICO WANTED AND NEEDED U.S. INVESTMENT; THAT MEXICO HAD A SPIRIT OF CONTINUITY UNKNOWN IN THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA AND THAT THEY THUS COULD COUNT ON MEXICAN COMMITMENTS AS LASTING FOR AT LEAST TEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS.

3. PERHAPS IN MAKING AN INDIVIDIOUS COMPARISON WITH THE  
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REST OF LATIN AMERICA, ZAPATA CITED ECHEVERRIA'S FEAR

THAT VENEZUELA WOULD SOON HAVE A MILITARY COUP. IN REPLY TO CHILDS' QUESTION ZAPATA SAID THAT THE THREAT OF A COUP DERIVED MORE FROM THE ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF MONEY ACCRUING TO THE GOV WHICH HAD AROUSED MILITARY CUPIDITY MORE THAN FROM IDEOLOGICAL REASONS.

4. ZAPATA HAD ACCOMPANIED MRS. ECHEVERRIA THROUGHOUT HER ALMOST WEEK-LONG VISIT TO CUBA AND, WHILE HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAD FOUND AMPLE EVIDENCE OF AUTHORITARIAN METHODS USED TO GOVERN CUBA, THEY HAD ALSO FOUND CONSIDERABLE MATERIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROGRESS. NOT ONLY HAD LIFE IMPROVED DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS FOR THE AVERAGE CUBAN, BUT CUBAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SEEMED CONSIDERABLY MORE SELF-CONFIDENT AND THUS LESS STRIDENT THAN IN OTHER TIMES. THEY HAD FOUND CASTRO HIMSELF REMARKABLY PRAGMATIC AND FILLED WITH COMMON SENSE. HE HAD INDICATED HE WAS PLEASED BY RENEWED INTEREST IN CUBA ON THE PART OF VARIOUS U.S. CIRCLES AND, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, SAID HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SELL SUGAR AND TO TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES.

5. COMMENT; MEXICAN ALLEGATIONS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A VENEZUELAN COUP MAY BE A LITTLE SELF-SERVING AS WE HAVE HEARD IN DIPLOMATIC AND GOVERNMENTAL CIRCLES THAT ECHEVERRIA IS CONCERNED THAT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ IS A RIVAL FOR LEA'S "LEADERSHIP" IN LATIN AMERICA AND ECHEVERRIA FEARS THAT PEREZ IS GAINING TOO MUCH PRESTIGE BECAUSE OF HIS "ANTI-U.S. ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS" AND THUS IS OUTFLANKING ECHEVERRIA ON THE LEFT. A MAJOR REASON FOR MRS. ECHEVERRIA'S CARIBBEAN VOYAGE ALLEGEDLY IS TO TRY TO OFFSET PEREZ'S GROWING INFLUENCE IN THE AREA.

6. IT IS INTERESTING THAT MARLISE SIMMONS, THE WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT HERE WHO RECENTLY ACCOMPANIED THE THEN MINISTER OF NATIONAL RESOURCES, FLORES DE LA PENA, ON HIS TRIP TO CUBA, LAST NIGHT TOLD ME THAT CASTRO HAD MADE SIMILARREMARKS TO HER, STATING THAT "RECIBIMOS CON AGRADO" THE INTEREST SHOWN IN CUBA BY U.S. CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESS GROUPS. INCIDENTALLY, MARLISE SIMMONS ALSO HEARD THAT SENATOR KENNEDY WOULD BE VISITING CUBA IN THE NEXT TWO

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